News release

Met Office clarifies summer forecast

12 May 2005

Statements in this morning's media imply that the Met Office has forecast record-breaking temperatures this summer. This is not true. Advances in meteorology mean that the Met Office can now make three- or four-month forecasts that suggest whether a season will be warmer or colder and wetter or drier than normal. However, forecasters cannot predict actual daily temperatures more than a week or so in advance.

The latest seasonal forecast from the Met Office suggests that temperatures in July and August are likely to be above normal. There will undoubtedly be some hot days this summer but, at this stage, it is not possible to predict whether specific temperature thresholds will be reached. The seasonal forecast was used yesterday to launch the Department of Health's Heatwave Service, that will be backed by Met Office forecasts, which aims to protect lives during periods of hot weather. The Met Office will be issuing detailed temperature forecasts during the summer as and when necessary but within the timescales of our normal operational forecasts.

For further information:
Met Office Press Office +44 (0)1392 886655
E-mail: pressoffice@metoffice.gov.uk

Met Office Customer Centre 0870 900 0100
If you're outside the UK +44 (0)1392 885680

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